

West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2016

Attendees: Jeff Bersin, Joanna Curry-Sartori, Cyndi Brown, Jackie Colon, Joe Kalache, Leo Negron, Helen Droган, Mary Andrews, Grace Johnson, Dave Pauluk, Dr. Delgado

Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures / Announcements/Refreshments

Approve minutes- motion to approve – Approved - Distribute minutes

Announcements:

- 2 upcoming parent presentations
 - Stay Connected: Panel on parenting and technology, March 14
 - Calm, Connected, Effective- parenting to nurture responsible, respectful human beings, part of Principal coffee, April 6, Conard, 7 pm.

General Discussion- The medical perspective on current substance abuse & prevention possibilities

We were joined by Dr. Delgado- Emergency physician and medical toxicologist - Hartford Hospital, Assistant Professor of EM - U. Conn School of Medicine, Consultant - CT Poison Control Center. We were also joined by commission members who are school nurses, Mary Andrews and Grace Johnson.

Summary of ideas shared by Dr. Delgado:

- With adults, we are still seeing heroin and cocaine use. Prescription drugs are the main concerns. Vast majority of cases with older adults are accidental prescription drug overdoses.
- Narcan--- extremely safe. Doesn't think Narcan will promote drug use.
- Probably the majority of new Hepatitis C cases are from IV drug use.
- Early studies suggested that treating acute pain with opioid did not lead to dependency, but now we know this is not the case. Yes this has changed a lot in recent years. Recently came out with best practices document. "Basically, we prescribe the fewest pills as is reasonable. Then refer to primary care to check if more is still needed." Also not prescribe higher controlled release. Doctors no longer replace lost or stolen meds prescribed by different doctor. Every time they renew their medical license, doctors have to take test related to prescribing medications.
- One issue- Doctors have a busy practice with chronic pain patients. Doctor may think "if I prescribe enough then patient will go away." At Hartford Hospital the max # pills they can prescribe is 20 without getting supervisor approval --- can't just hit a button and prescribe 60 opioids as they used to do.
- Drug use has cycles - things come and go. Nationally trends are a little bit up.
- Regarding THC and CBC (chemicals in marijuana) - our substance use colleagues don't like it. Medical Dispensaries have different type of marijuana than street dealers. People come into the ER if the street drugs are laced with something and they end up with more severe symptoms than they expected.
- Medical Marijuana prescribing is monitored. Licensing of dispensary is very controlled. Most who've become certified to distribute MM are oncologists and pain specialist.
- Dispensaries can tell you the breakdown of chemicals. Patient takes MM to effect. You have cancer patients who feel terrible and this really helps, but definitively has downsides. A big experiment--- we won't know its real impact for 10 years.
- Other patterns- We were seeing more use of bath salts and synthetic adenoids. This peaked 8 to 12 months ago. May be tailing off, but also may just be that clinicians now have experience with what they are seeing and what patients need so they are not being sent to the ER.

Discussion between Dr. Delgado and other commission members

- RE what kids look for – a thrill, an experience. Seeing alcohol and marijuana a lot with athletes.
- The latest report--- kids are bringing laced brownies to school and we have no way to monitor. Also hearing more about chewing tobacco.
- What do they tell the parents in ER? Usually not time to advise kids- not effective at this time as they are still intoxicated. We have a standard discharge packet. We are not doing much counseling. At the same time, it may be a key place to connect with parents and kids as we've just saved the kid's life so they might listen.
- How do we get more info out to parents, kids, families? Some counsellors from Rushford are very helpful but it is hard for families to hear. E.g. if you really want to decrease likelihood of your child using alcohol- don't have alcohol in the house.
- We can more to do to educate kids - more than just beginning of school year. Good if parents and kids hear the info on substance abuse together. Maybe need someone to come in and tell the ugly facts. Also maybe physicians, counsellors come talk to captain of teams, sobriety squad. Need to have more conversations.
- Its about building awareness, not labeling it as "bad". Its normal to want to experiment. Kids need to know the impact it is going to have. Take the "charge" away. As soon as we make it "bad", then it's a flag for an adolescent- "Oh I want to do this".
- One of the hooks the schools have used is athletics...because if kids are caught using, there are repercussions. All athletes have to sit out for 4 weeks of games when caught --- they all know this would be the consequence. Now this applies to the performing arts as well.
- Another great consequence is community service.
- We've had a number of kids in DAT process where the parents refuse to send kids through the Wheeler process.
- Schools no longer get reports from police, e.g. If there were parties on weekends.
- See "West Hartford Cares" info cards that SAPC made a few years ago with contact info for community resources. Also High School student ID cards used to have key referrals on the back but this was discontinued.
- As parent, what I see most is alcohol. What scares me the most is opioid. What has been most helpful to me are people who do this professionally (e.g. Rushford)
- What if we bring in Rushford people for substance abuse nights? All kids have to go through this presentation to play athletics. Other kids should be invited. What if we make sure more kids come.
- It could be a town wide event for all extracurricular.
- We could have a panel address a lot of issues.
- Could we add/support the presentation/meeting, already happening?
- Could we get involved in middle school level?

School administrators – Torr Fiske and Lisa Daly will come to SAPC after they have results. Let's share athletics evening idea. LBE could help with this.

New Business

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Curry-Sartori

